February 22, 1972

Mr. Perry Wolff and
Mr. Irv Drasnin
CBS
51 West 52nd Street
New York, New York 10019

Dear Sirs:

"Misunderstanding China" was a fabulous program -- witty, organized, direct and right on target. I would love to see it again.

Please accept one small criticism from a fan: I think using a film clip from Frank Capra's "The Bitter Tea of General Yen" was a mistake.

After all, Stanwyck in the film portrays a young Westerner, eager to see the Chinese people "helped;" her fiancee is straight, upstanding, idealistic -- exactly the American myth most people accepted at that time, and Capra knew it. He was careful to make the young man dull. All this is established and then Stanwyck gets on a train and is led through that remarkable process of self-discovery the central moment of which is the dream sequence. Capra makes, poetically, a point similar to the one your program made. He knew where the myth was at.

Now maybe you knew this, but you didn't say so, and it seems unbelievable that you would include this film clip with the others.

I don't think this is trivial. The blanket assumption that old movies are all racist cuts us off from some lovely poetry -- from our cultural heritage. And in shedding those aspects of our tradition that reflect our cultural blindness, I think we should conserve those moments in which our artists have seen clearly. The trend is to just throw the whole thing out and start over, and at the very least this has led to some incredibly boring movies and to some very self-indulgent "experimenting."

I don't think a work by one of the masters of cinema should be consigned to oblivion because someone has confused it with Dr. Fu Manchu.

I have gone into rather more detail than I intended; particularly since this is a partisan letter in favor of the program -- I guess I thought it was so good I felt I could speak directly to its creators about something I am concerned with.

Incidentally, everyone I have talked to who saw "Misunderstanding China" shares my opinion of it (that it was astoundingly good, that is; I don't know anyone who has ever heard of "The Bitter Tea of General Yen").

Sincerely,

Sue Conner

Sue Conner, 5 Haynes Street, Hartford, Conn., 06103

Conner
51 Haynes Street
Hartford, Conn. 06103

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ALWAYS USE
ZIP CODE

Mr. Perry Wolff and
Mr. Irv Drasnin
CBS
~~51 West 52nd Street~~ 35 W. 45 St.
New York, New York 10019

CBS NEWS
A Division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc.
524 West 57 Street
New York, New York 10019
(212) 765-4321

Dear Ms. Connor:

Thank you very much for your thoughtful letter of 22 February 72 in response to the CBS NEWS broadcast "Misunderstanding China."

I regret not answering sooner but I have just returned from vacation.

I, of course, welcome your criticism as well as your praise. I would not want you to think that we made any blanket assumptions about the movies nor did we intend in any way to equate the work of a Capra with whoever it was who directed the Charlie Chan or Fu Manchu films.

It was precisely that "process of self-discovery" you refer to for which we chose the dream sequence from "The Bitter Tea of General Yen"; because it did hit upon and reveal a truth which has been important in the relationship and attitudes of Americans with regard to China. As for the sequence that followed the dream, whatever Capra's intentions, it and several other episodes in the film were eloquent in dramatizing (or satirizing) American assumptions about the Chinese.

In the case of each film sequence we selected, the criterion was not whether the movie was good or bad but whether or not it revealed something important to understand about how we've looked at the Chinese, and how we've seen ourselves. Some of those revelations come closer to wild fantasy than others. Some, as in "The Bitter Tea of General Yen" and others we used, come very close to reality. In no instance, I assure you, did we think it trivial either.

A postscript you might find interesting is that Mr. Capra also was responsible for the World War Two "Why We Fight" series, including "The Battle of China," which also was used in the broadcast. While there is no question but that it was made with the best of intentions out of a high sense of patriotism, it nevertheless served to perpetuate many of the myths about China which have taken so long to be broken down (if, indeed, they have been).

In any case, I am pleased that you would take the time and trouble to write such a thoughtful letter and I am gratified by your response to the broadcast.

Sincerely,

Irv Drasnin
Producer

Ms. Sue Connor
5 Haynes Street
Hartford, Connecticut
06103

March 31, 1972

NBC NEWS
A DIVISION OF NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC.
THIRTY ROCKEFELLER PLAZA, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10020, CIRCLE 7-8300

STUART SCHULBERG
Executive Producer
TODAY

February 25, 1972

Mr. Perry Wolff
Executive Producer
CBS News
35 West 45th Street
New York, New York

Dear Perry Wolff:

I watched your special at 6 p.m. last Sunday night with great admiration. It was the most interesting, stimulating and valuable lesson about China I've seen yet--not in terms of Maoist politics which I'm tiring of already but in terms of the real equation, the ultimate human relationship that our two peoples will have to develop if the politics wind up meaning anything at all. I didn't recognize the names of most of the contributors, but I wish you would pass on to them my respect and gratitude.

With best regards,

Sincerely,

Stuart Schulberg

Stuart Schulberg

SS:cc

CBS NEWS
A Division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc.
524 West 57 Street
New York, New York 10019
(212) 765-4321

Dear Mr. Schulberg:

Perry Wolff has faithfully passed on to me your most thoughtful letter regarding the China broadcast.

I am genuinely pleased and gratified by your generous response, and by your taking the time and interest to write.

It's not often that one receives such notices from persons like yourself, which makes it doubly meaningful.

Again, my sincere thanks.

Best regards.

Irv Drasnin
Producer

Mr. Stuart Schulberg
Executive Producer, TODAY
NBC NEWS
Thirty Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10020

March 2, 1972

CBS MEMORANDUM

FROM: Irv Drasnin
TO: MISS DOWELL
DATE: March 31, 1972

Attached is a letter from Professor Lyman Van Slyke, Director of the East Asian Studies center at Stanford University.

Should he be in touch with you, I would greatly appreciate your placing the highest priority on his request for use of a print of "Misunderstanding China."

Secondly, I have a request from Professor Phillip Huang of the History Department at UCLA, who did not see the broadcast and would like to borrow a print for screening. I would appreciate that also receiving a high priority.

Thank you for your cooperation.

ID

CBS MEMORANDUM

Thanks.
It had a very high rating
Will probably rebroadcast
if during the summer
Yes

FROM: Peter Davis
TO: Bill Leonard
DATE: March 1, 1972

Unfortunately, I missed Irv Drasnin's China documentary when it was broadcast. I looked at it today, however, and if it is not too presumptuous -- or even if it is -- I would like to urge you to rebroadcast it as soon as possible. In the welter of actual transmission from China itself, this documentary sort of got lost, yet it appeared to me to be by far the best journalism television has to offer on the Chinese mystery.

Such a totally civilized, unpretentious, deeply comprehending broadcast makes me proud to be around here.

Peter

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1972 FEB 21 PM 1:34
CBS TELEVISION NETWORK N.Y.
BROADCAST CENTER

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IRV DRASNIN CARE CBS

35 WEST 45 5 FLR NYK 10036

WE ARE ALL SO PROUD OF YOUR SUCCESSFUL CHINA PROGRAM EVERY

DAILY BRUIN REFLECTS YOUR GLORY• WITH LOVE

M E DAVIS•

September 17, 1972

Mr. Irv Drasnin, Producer
"Misunderstanding China"
CBS Television News
c/o KPIX Television
San Francisco, California

Dear Sir:

Will your recently broadcast television special "Misunderstanding China" be available to university classes and other groups for showing? I would appreciate knowing the name and address of the distributor of your excellent production.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kenneth R. Logan

1810 Arch Street
Berkeley, California 94709

CHINA PRINT REQUESTS

NAME	WHERE	DATE NEEDED	REFERRED TO	CORR.? DATE	Borrow/Buy?
Fairbank	Harvard				
GASSter	Rutgers		Dowell		either
Coogan	Mena High, Arkansas		Dowell		borrow
Denenberg	Manheim High, Pa.		Dowell		borrow
Lodwick	Ohio U.		Dowell		borrow
Wiley	National Co. U.S./China Relations				borrow
Jolie	NYU	July 12	Dowell--no luck	phone 3/27/72 she will call closer to date	borrow
Lin	McGill		Sam Suratt--film achives	Drasnin letter 3/3/72	borrow/buy
Hubleys	815 Park Ave. #12B	March 29			borrow

Beer
Van Slyke

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY *The State University of New Jersey*

LIVINGSTON COLLEGE
Department of History
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903

March 4, 1972

Dear Mr. Kuralt:

Your program "Misunderstanding China" was superb. Is it available for purchase or rental (for showing to students)?

May I also take this opportunity to say how much my wife and I enjoy your "On The Road" reports. Could we some day have a "special" (or a series) repeating some of your favorites? (Ours are the telephone operator who worked at home - the couple who sold penny candy - the man who climbed the highest hill in every state - ...!)

Michael Gasster

MICHAEL GASSTER
Associate Professor of Chinese History

OHIO UNIVERSITY - PORTSMOUTH
940 SECOND STREET, P.O. BOX 278
PORTSMOUTH, OHIO 45662

February 24, 1972

May Darnell 3/22/72

Mr. Charles Kuralt
CBS News
51 W. 52nd Street
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Kuralt:

I saw your program "Misunderstanding China" last Sunday evening and think it was the best of the many specials on China which have been broadcast recently. Could you tell me if a copy of it is available for use by universities? I would very much like to use it for my History of Modern China course, and I am sure others at the university would enjoy seeing it again.

Thank you for your help and cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Kathleen L. Lodwick

Kathleen L. Lodwick
Instructor in History

KLL/r

MENA HIGH SCHOOL
OFFICE OF PRINCIPAL
MENA, ARKANSAS 71953

Feb. 22, 1972

May Druell 3/22/72

Charles Kuralt
CBS News Dept.
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Kuralt,

After viewing the CBS-tv special "Misunderstanding China" on Sunday, February 20, I am wondering if CBS News Department would allow the borrowing of the film for use in my senior history class. It is very timely since we are now studying the Boxer Rebellion and other Asian turmoil at the turn of the 20th century.

Sincerely,

H. Coogan

H. Coogan
History Dept.
High School
Mena, Arkansas 71953